



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASS SPECIFICATION

CLASSIFIED

PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKER

Class No. 005253

SENIOR PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKER

Class No. 005254

■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE

To perform investigations, consultation, and casework for children and adults in protective services programs; and to perform related work as required.

■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Positions in this class series are allocated only to the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Child Welfare Services. Protective Services Workers are responsible for investigating and evaluating allegations of abuse or neglect, recommending protective program placement, and providing casework services to children placed in a protective services program. This class series is distinguished from the Social Worker series in that the latter performs casework assignments related to social, educational, physical and psychological dysfunctions that do not require protective intervention.

Protective Services Worker: This is the journey level class in the Protective Services Worker series. Upon appointment, incumbents participate in a training academy administered by Child Welfare Services and work under immediate supervision. As knowledge and competency are gained, incumbents work under general supervision and are expected to perform the full range of investigation and casework services in protective services programs.

Senior Protective Services Worker: This is the lead level class in the Protective Service Worker series. Under general supervision, incumbents perform difficult, complex, or sensitive casework assignments and provide technical guidance and training to Protective Service Workers, Social Workers, or support staff. Incumbents may also act in the absence of a Protective Services Supervisor.

■ FUNCTIONS

The examples of functions listed in the class specification are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the classes. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the positions.

Essential Functions:

Protective Services Worker:

1. Investigates child abuse and neglect allegations by interviewing and counseling parents, children, and adolescents, analyzing information and data collected, determining degree of danger and risk of future abuse and neglect, determining if removal of the child from the home is necessary, and conducting time sensitive investigations per court order or in compliance with State of California law.
2. Provides crisis intervention actions pertaining to children and families as deemed appropriate.
3. Provides verbal and written recommendations, in regard to the case planning for children, to representatives of the juvenile court, family court, residential treatment centers/programs, and other agencies.
4. Facilitates family reunification by monitoring behavior and progress displayed by family members, interacting with family members to provide encouragement and support, and provide services so that children may be successfully reunified with their parents; documents family reunification and maintenance steps by writing progress reports and case plans that serve as legal documents or court orders.
5. Prepares appropriate case plans, as per court orders or voluntary services, by using the automated CWS/CMS system, and submits such plans to the assigned supervisor and courts for approval.
6. Uses automated case management (CMS/CWS) systems to write status reports and document actions pertaining to assigned cases.

7. Evaluates the actions or behavior of parents, children, and other persons associated with cases and determines the need for appropriate individual or family educational or counseling programs such as parenting skills, drug testing, substance abuse, or other educational/counseling programs.
8. Conducts permanency and long term planning, such as foster care, guardianship, or adoption, for children who have been removed from homes or placement facilities.
9. Places children in homes of family and non-family members, foster homes, and residential treatment centers.
10. Monitors the behavior and well-being of children who have been placed in foster homes and residential treatment centers.
11. Arranges in-home services to facilitate the placements of children by contacting CWS employees assigned to the Intensive Family Preservation Program (IFPP) and contacting representatives of contracted agencies and community-based organizations; and may initiate referrals on behalf of clients.
12. Serves as a member of teams consisting of professionals from law enforcement agencies, medical agencies, and other outside agencies organized to discuss cases/referrals/investigations, develop or revise policies and procedures, perform process improvements, or enhance collaborative efforts.
13. Researches the availability of foster homes by contacting CWS employees who handle placement coordination, reviewing lists of available foster homes, and making contacts with resources/persons.
14. Conducts assessments of homes belonging to relatives or non-related extended family members to ensure that homes are appropriate for children who have been removed from their homes.
15. Provides courteous, high quality service to members of the public by personally responding to requests for service or appropriate referral.

Senior Protective Services Worker (In addition to the functions listed above):

1. Provides technical guidance and training to Protective Services Workers, Social Workers, and support staff.
2. Assists with providing training and orientation and provides on the job training to newly hired CWS staff.
3. Provides mentoring to Protective Services Workers and Social Workers assigned to the unit; provides consultation to Protective Service Workers and Social Workers in regard to the status of cases and HHSA-CWS protocols.
4. Provides feedback to Protective Services Supervisors pertaining to the job performance of Protective Service Workers, Social Workers, and support staff.
5. Acts in the absence of a Protective Services Supervisor by reviewing court reports, case plans, and other documents for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with state law, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and protocol; acts in the absence of a Protective Services Supervisor by performing routine administrative functions such as attending CWS supervisory meetings and conferences, approving automated timesheets and mileage, claims submitted by employees, maintaining records, reports, and logs; and conducting time studies.
6. May assign or transfer new and existing cases to a unit of protective service staff.
7. May approve case plans and reports to be sent to the court on behalf of the Protective Services Supervisor by noting written reports or using the automated CMS/CWS system.
8. May facilitate multi-disciplinary team meetings to discuss and exchange information on community resources, conduct case consultation sessions, interact with client families, and conduct follow up or post-action steps on cases.

■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- Laws, rules, regulations, policy, and procedures pertaining to the operation and provisions of Child Welfare Services.
- Ethical standards and conduct as stated by the National Association of Social Workers, Code of Ethics.
- State of California and County of San Diego laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to child abuse reporting.
- State of California reporting laws and requirements as applied to incidents of child abuse and neglect.
- Confidentiality laws, rules, regulations, and policy when responding to inquiries.
- Juvenile Court procedures.
- Methods and techniques used to conduct investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect; causes and treatment pertaining to child abuse and neglect.
- Interviewing and intervention methods and techniques.

- Methods and techniques of crisis assessment, crisis intervention, and safety and risk assessment as applied to child welfare.
- General methods and practices used to perform casework.
- Methods and techniques used to identify specific needs of children, families, and adults from diverse, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds.
- Concepts pertaining to cultural and diversity awareness and skill development pertaining to service delivery for persons of varying cultural differences.
- Theories of child and adolescent development and behaviors associated with varying ages of children.
- Parenting skills such as forms of discipline appropriate for varying ages of children or adolescents.
- Theories and principles family dynamics.
- Behavioral concepts of grief, loss, and separation experienced by family members and children.
- Dynamics of substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illnesses, and their impact on families and children.
- Automated information systems and equipment used to perform case management functions.
- Telephone, office, and online etiquette.
- County customer service objectives and strategies.

Senior Protective Services Worker (In addition to the above):

- Effective leadership styles and methods when interacting with Protective Service Workers, Social Workers, and support staff.
- Basic concepts, principles, and practices of supervision and training.

Skills and Abilities to:

- Assess, diagnose, and apply intervention techniques to child, family, and adult-related problems.
- Assess and evaluate home and family situations to determine if crisis intervention is needed.
- Analyze situations and exercise authority in an appropriate manner.
- Apply social work methods in difficult work situations while maintaining a professional demeanor.
- Assess the clients and/or families' immediate needs and ensure customer's receipt of needed services through personal service or referral.
- Maintain confidentiality of files and records that are considered personal and sensitive in nature.
- Maintain accurate records and documentation.
- Organize, prioritize, and complete a large volume of work within strict time deadlines.
- Exercise appropriate judgment in answering questions and releasing information; analyze and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.
- Intervene to resolve verbal and physical confrontations between children.
- Communicate in writing in a clear, concise, accurate, and understandable manner when preparing reports, case summaries, and other written documents.
- Communicate effectively with a variety of individuals representing diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Function calmly and effectively in challenging situations, which require a high degree of sensitivity, tact and diplomacy.
- Exercise objectivity, empathy, judgment, fairness, and restraint when interacting with persons who may be unreasonable, agitated, upset, hostile, combatant, potentially violent, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Treat County employees, representatives of outside agencies, and members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- Provide prompt, efficient and responsive service for those contacted in the course of work.
- Use automated information systems and equipment to perform case management duties.
- Operate modern office equipment, such as personal computers, calculators, copy machines, facsimiles, telephones, and file cabinets in a safe and efficient manner.

Senior Protective Services Worker (In addition to the above):

- Effectively serve as lead worker over Protective Service Workers, Social Workers, and support staff.
- Effectively serve as chair or facilitator over multi-disciplinary teams.

■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training or experience, which clearly demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities stated above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

Protective Services Worker:

- A bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited college or university; OR;
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with at least 24 semester units in the behavioral sciences, AND, one (1) year of work experience or two (2) semesters of supervised internship experience in a family or children's service agency providing supervision, treatment or protective services.

Senior Protective Services Worker:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with at least 24 units in the behavioral sciences, AND, three (3) years of experience performing protective services social work in the County of San Diego or an equivalent public protective services agency, OR,
- A masters degree from an accredited college or university in social work, child development, health and human services, psychology, sociology, counseling, criminal justice, or a closely related field in the areas of behavioral or social science; completed graduate school curriculum must have included at least one semester or two quarters of a field supervision practicum or internship, AND, two (2) years of experience performing protective services social work in the County of San Diego or an equivalent public protective services agency.

Notes – Protective Services Worker and Senior Protective Services Worker:

- The term “public protective services agency” is defined as that of any U.S. state or county agency providing services comparable to the Health and Human Services Agency.
- Some positions in these classes perform duties that require the possession of a master's degree, as mandated by the State of California.
- In order to meet the minimum educational requirements listed above, applicants must possess a bachelor degree from an accredited college or university before or at the time of application.

■ ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the classifications. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.

Continuous: upward and downward flexion of the neck. Frequent: sitting, walking, standing, bending and twisting of waist, repetitive use of hands to operate computers, printers, and copiers, and lifting and carrying case files weighing up to 25 pounds. Occasional: squatting, kneeling simple grasping, reaching above and below shoulder level.

Polinsky Children's Center and San Pasqual Academy (In addition to above):

Frequent standing, walking, bending, stooping, and kneeling. Occasional lifting and carrying small children ranging in ages from one to seven years, who weigh up to 50 pounds. Mobility and strength to handle babies, restrain children up to 18 years of age, and intervene to resolve verbal and physical confrontations involving residents.

■ SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS

License:

A valid California Class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment or the ability to arrange necessary, timely transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their personal vehicle.

Training Requirement – Polinsky and San Pasqual Assignments:

Incumbents must successfully complete training on Professional Assaultive Response Training (PART) within the first 12 months of employment.

Working Conditions:

Work is divided between an office environment and the field; work in the field requires travel to the homes of clients, adult and juvenile detention facilities, courts, other county departments, and outside agencies. Work involves frequent exposure to computer screens. Work may involve occasional exposure to unpleasant and unsanitary sights, sounds, and odors. Work may involve exposure to uncertain, unpredictable, and emotionally charged conditions when interacting with persons who are irrational, erratic, upset, hostile, combative, and violent. Incumbents may be occasionally required to interact with persons who are mentally ill, homeless, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Incumbents may be subject to work during evenings, weekends, and holidays. Incumbents may be subject to work on a standby and emergency call back basis.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a background investigation.

Probationary Period

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in these classifications shall serve a probationary period of 12 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

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Variable Entry: Y
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